

Kevin Hutchins

From: Enzo Camporeale
Sent: Friday, 10 October 2014 1:57 PM
To: Kevin Hutchins
Subject: FW: Proposed closing paragraph [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

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From: Philip Gerber <PGerber@prolegis.com.au>
Sent: Friday, 10 October 2014 11:21:13 AM
To: Enzo Camporeale
Subject: Fwd: Proposed closing paragraph

Philip Gerber
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----- Original message -----

From: Philip Gerber
Date: 10/10/2014 10:08 AM (GMT+10:00)
To: Enzo Camporeale
,tony.giugni@childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au, Anya.Poukchanski@childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au,
Andrea McNair ,Karen Zeev
Cc: Jon Cheung
Subject: Fwd: Proposed closing paragraph

----- Original message -----

From: Philip Gerber
Date: 10/10/2014 8:30 AM (GMT+10:00)
To: Kirk Morton
Cc: george.aghajanian@hillsong.com, Jon Cheung
Subject: RE: Proposed closing paragraph

Dear Mr Giugni

We are instructed that the response to the questions in your letter dated 9 October 2014 are as set out below.

Question 1 – No

Question 2 – The matter was overlooked due to a lack of understanding at the time in the context of complying with the comprehensive legislative child protection regime that came into force in and around the year 2000.

Question 3 a) – In paragraph 2 of Section 9 of Hillsong Church's protecting and Supporting Children and Young People (HIL. 0001.003.0025) the statement 'Committed any form of child abuse' refers to all individuals against whom there has been findings or convictions of child sexual abuse. Whilst zero tolerance to child sexual abuse applies as a general principle, the policy of exclusion applies to persons against whom there has been findings or convictions of child sexual abuse.

Question 3 b) – This includes information received from a third party about grooming behaviour, substantiated complaints or convictions of child sexual abuse and observations made by our staff or volunteers of suspected grooming behaviour or child sexual abuse.

Question 4 - The term "historical" refers to information received about people who attend Hillsong Church against whom there are no findings or convictions? when that information does not come from a complainant/victim and does not relate to alleged activity at Hillsong but which suggests that the person has or might have a history of predatory behaviour e.g. when the person comes from another church or is reported on by a concerned third party.

Question 5 – Where the identity of an alleged offender or a victim is known or information which will assist the police to investigate or prosecute a serious offence is known.

Question 6 – The current policy and procedure describes how all complaints and allegations of abuse should be recorded and provided to Pastoral Care (ref HIL 0001.003.0019, pages 9-13) and are required to be referred to the General Manager. For all matters relating to staff, the discipline procedure has been explained in the document titled 'Discipline and Termination Policy'.

Question 7 – In the case of an allegation against a staff member, excluding the Senior Pastor (currently Brian Houston), the matter would be dealt with in accordance with the relevant employment agreement with the involvement of Senior Management and the Board. For those staff that are Ordained Ministers, the matter would be referred to the ACC. In the case of Senior Pastor (i.e. Brian Houston) the matter would be referred to the ACC directly for them to deal with under their policies and procedures.

Question 8 – There have been gaps identified in current policies, some of which relate to the recent changes to legislation in NSW. The changes identified which require changes to be made to the policy and procedure manual include:

- Hillsong's obligations in NSW as a 'reporting body' to the NSW Children's Guardian needs to be described;
- The new Working With Children Check requirements in NSW, which have been explained in the current Hillsong application forms, have to be explained in the current policy and procedure manual;
- The specification of child abuse as a 'criminal offence' needs to be clearly stated and explained;
- An explanation is needed of the reporting responsibilities under s316 of the Crimes Act 1900 (NSW);
- Processes for keeping records of allegations and their handling in a standardised format needs to be stated;
- Specification of minimum requirements for staff and volunteers of initial and ongoing Child Protection training including the handling of complaints handling needs to be stated;

- A formalisation of a conflict of interest policy.

We are further instructed that Hillsong Church is committed to the safe guarding of children and the ongoing development of its child protection systems. Since the year 2000, Hillsong's policies and procedures have undergone a series of major developments in response to changing requirements to legislation and the growth of the Church into various states of Australia. Also since that time, Hillsong has made significant investment into establishing a human resource management department and its IT systems which enable the management of staff, volunteers, and the check-in procedures of children into Church programs.

During this time, Hillsong has proactively worked with the Commission for Children and Young People by engaging in a pilot program for volunteer screening. Beyond the completion of this program in 2005, the Church maintained a positive working relationship with the Commission, which was evidenced by the written communication from the Commission.

A child safety committee was established in 2010 consisting of key Hillsong personnel and external professionals.

At a governance level, Hillsong Church during 2012 broadened the scope of the Audit and Risk Committee to focus beyond financial risk and compliance to all key areas of Church. In this process it was identified that 'Youth and Kids' would be an area of 'targeted board oversight'. Since early 2014, the Audit and Risk Committee has been supervising an internal review of the compliance obligations and risk in all youth and children programs. This process will continue until such time as the Audit and Risk Committee are satisfied that all requirements identified by internal review and any recommendations from the Royal Commission are implemented.

Yours faithfully

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